AN ADDRESS

TO THE

Militia * Force * of * Military * District * No. * 7,

BY

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OF THE

PERMANENT MILITIA STAFF, QUEBEC, CANADA.

Composed for an after-dinner speech, when the writer believed that he was to be removed from the District.

I.

I cannot, will not say, *Adieu*,
  But rather, *Au revoir ;*
You are not friends of yesterday,
  Nor comrades of a year ;
But have, for five and twenty years,
  In camp——at home ; abroad ;
Shouldered with me the bayonet,
  Or buckled on the sword :
At mess, or march, in peace or war,
  Together, side by side,
We helped to make our little force
  A source of real pride :—
We saw it in its infancy,
  A few raw volunteers ;
We saw, and marvelled as we saw,
  This Force in later years ;

II.

Well disciplined, well officered ;
  Well generaled, I ween,
Fighting its way, like veterans,
  For country and for Queen ;
And, proving to the world abroad,
  That we, in Canada,
Have turned our little to account,
  By a wise policy :
That the militia system here,
  Is popular, as wise,
And well adapted to the wants,
  That do, or may, arise :
A system as complete I trow,
  As any, near or far ;
All honour to our Minister—
  The Minister of War !

III.

And well is it for Canada,
  That whilst in embryo
This Military system moves,
  Beset by friend and foe,
Whose misplaced zeal, or factious hate,
  Alike the fabric strains,
That Sir George Cartier's mantle falls,
  On men of tact and brains ;
Who wisely gauge the Country's needs,
  By what it can afford ;
And will not needlessly exchange,
  The ploughshare for the sword ;
But make the most of what they have,
  Or can rely upon——
Men like our worthy Minister,
  James Colebrooke Patterson.

IV.

And England lent us Generals,
  As you are all aware,
Who helped to build the fabric up,
  Or keep it in repair ;
For all were clever architects,
  Though *one* succeeded best,
And *one* found the material less,
  Adhesive than the rest.
These Generals, as follows, came :—
  Sir P. Macdougall ; then
Robertson-Ross ; Sir Selby-Smyth ;
  And Luard ; able men.
But still we lacked the confidence,
  Practice alone can yield,
Not got from theory, but gained
  Upon the battle-field.

V.

When lo! Rebellion's monster head,
Startled the Great North-West,
And, looming ominously high,
Gave us the needed test:
Then, with a bold, spontaneous shout,
The people sprang to arms,
And volunteered the Force, twice told,
Needed for war's alarms.
On, through the prairie stretch they marched,
Coming from near and far——
From east and west; from north and south;
On, to the scene of war;
On, through each *coulé*, creek and marsh,
All alkali; on, on,
Led by Lieutenant-General,
Sir Frederic Middleton.

VI.

Fain would I close this canto now,
Whilst shouts of victory,
Re-echoing all around, proclaim,
That glory crowns the day;
Fain would I drop the veil, nor ask,
Nor seek to find out why,
Our brave commanding officer,
Bade Canada good-bye:
Enough, he did so. Soldiers we,
To listen; to obey;
Perchance to pause, and ponder on,
Life's mutability:
Le Roi est mort! Long live the King!
Down with regrets and grief,
For Major General Herbert now
Holds the command-in-chief;—

VII.

The youngest of the Generals
That yet has held command;
The youngest of the British six
Loaned by the mother-land:
The first one to proclaim aloud,
With no uncertain sound,
That they who seek promotion now
In knowledge must abound——
Must stand all equal tests with all;
Must feel, with honest pride,
Their training and their mettle too,
Have only to be tried:
That by-gone "playing soldier" has
Become a nobler game,
For Canada must take her place
In the fair field of Fame!

VIII.

And now to drop this metaphor,
Nor let the fancy roam,
But keep within the District here,
And speak of those at home,
Becomes my pleasing duty as
The hour is creeping on,
And my theme, 'though a fertile one,
Must not be dwelt upon;
I shall however, lightly touch
On each and every Corps
With its commanding officer,
As time permits no more;
And ask for an indulgent ear
To listen to my rhyme,
And if my halting verse should lag,
To bid the Corps——"Mark time."

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IX.

Colonel Duchesnay, D. A. G.,
Chief of the District Staff,
O'ertopping all his officers
In stature by a half,
Posseses all the qualities
To make one popular——
A kindly friend in time of peace;
A tower of strength in war:
A Hercules to crush a foe;
A leader as of old,
When fates of Battles could be turned
By one man strong and bold:
An English-French Canadian,
Or both in one combined,
With liberal, broad ideas——
An uncontracted mind.

X.

I notice, sitting on my right,
And visible from far,
In all his gorgeous trappings, that
Invincible Hussar,
Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull who,
Without Imperial aid,
Dependant on himself alone,
That noble Corps has made;
And brought it to a standard which
Outvies the armies round——
No finer lot of Cavalry
Can anywhere be found;
And oft the Commandant regrets,
That whilst on Touchwood hill,
No enemy had hove in sight
To test their pluck and skill.

XI.

I miss around this Festive Board
The once familiar face
Of him who was a soldier born,
Born of a soldier race,
I mean the gallant General Strange,
Our great progenitor
Of permanent artillery,
That useful arm in war:
And in the absent hero's stead
I note, with honest pride,
That Colonel Montizambert has
The vacancy supplied;
And with an innate zeal and love,
Sprung from *esprit de corps*,
He would out-Cæsar, Cæsar's self,
And be a Strange, or more.

XII.

And then we have our city corps—
The city volunteers—
The Cavalry; the Eighth; the Ninth;
Whose praise one daily hears:
For well trained horses; practiced men;
And able shots; I trow,
No better lot of volunteers,
Can any city shew;
Colonels Forsyth, and Roy, and White,
(Amyot and Prower too,)
Can tell us, if they wish it,
To whom the credit's due:
But who knows not the labour,
The trouble, cost and pains,
To keep up such efficient corps,
In money, time, and brains.

XIII.

And, the Quebec Field Battery,
An old and valued corps,
Well up in gunnery and drill,
And always to the fore,
In all the evolutions,
And shifts, and driving past,
If not invariably first,
Is never, never last.
And its commanding officer,
A second Bonaparte,
Is small in stature; great in deeds;
And large in soul and heart:
The gallant Colonel Lindsay.
Or as he's better known
To those who are more intimate
As "Crawford," stands alone.

XIV.

The Garrison Artillery
Next I would like to see
Formed in a single Regiment
And numbered "A" to "D,"
Composed of the four Batteries,
Quebec and Levis too,
Which now possess as goodly men
As any at Review:
They have their Senior-Major Roy,
And Majors Boulanger
And Vien and Captain Martineau,
A Soldierly array.
The Gaspé Battery, whose guns
Belched forth their fire of yore
Re-echoed from Cape Rosier's heights,
Exists, alas! no more.

XV.

And then we have our Rural Corps.
Of which we number ten;
All stalwart, healthy, country lads,
And strong and hardy men:——
The 17th: the 23rd;
The 55th; I ween
Can shew as fine a lot of men
As ever yet were seen:
The 61st; the 70th;
The 81st one too;
The 87th; 88th;
All splendid in Review:
The 89th; and 92nd;
Now we call a halt,
And challenge the inspecting eye
To point out any fault.

XVI.

The ten Lieutenant Colonels,
In column, line or square,
Are Massicotte, and Hudon,
And Laurin, and Frasér;
Desjardins, Ward, and Landry;
Erst-while, the late Genest;
Bignell, and lastly Dussault;
All fit for any test:
For these Commanding officers
Have graduated up
Through all the several lower ranks
Until they reached the top;
And now possess the confidence
Of all their following,
Who yield them, voluntarily,
Control of everything.

XVII.

A goodly shewing, one and all,
With "non-coms," rank and file,
Selected from the Country round
For courage, strength and style;
No Jail-birds from the prison drawn;
No out-casts from afar;
But all are men of rectitude,
'Though fighting men in war.
We miss poor Colonel Taschereau,
Late Major of Brigade,
Whose bold, stentorian voice was wont
To order the parade.
And now the long Review is o'er,
Of Military friends;
The list of Junior Officers
Begins where this one ends.

XVIII.

Let others write their history
When we have passed away,
And yielded up our offices
That each may have his day:
And yet, how much we envy youth!——
To think each well-faught field,
Won, at the cost of health or limb,
To these, at last, we yield!
But, one and all, if not *adieu*,
At least, an *au revoir*;——
A soldier's life's a shifting scene
Of hope and not dispair;
Of hope to meet on duty's path,
If not in Bower or Hall;
And, taking changes as they come,
To be prepared for all!

Col. Forrest